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Dear Friend,

To help answer common questions about how to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, I will be sending regular updates on the vaccine so that you have access to timely information. If you'd like a friend or neighbor to get this information as well, please have them sign up for my newsletter [here](#).

First, it should be noted that the New York State (NYS) government is primarily responsible for distributing the COVID-19 vaccine to residents. The federal government, through agencies like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), has provided support to state governments by developing guidelines and recommendations for how states can best administer their vaccine allocations. The federal government has worked to distribute the vaccines to state governments, local community health centers and to retailers.

For specific questions or concerns regarding the vaccine rollout in NYS, please call the New York State Department of Health hotline at 1-888-364-3065, or fill out the online form [here](#).

ELIGIBILITY UPDATES

New York is in Phases 1A and 1B of vaccine distribution. These phases prioritize those members of the community who are most at risk from infection and/or serious illness from COVID-19 and include all individuals aged 65 and over, high-risk front-line workers, and first responders, among other workers.

On February 15, the state expanded vaccine eligibility to also include adult New Yorkers of any age with certain medical conditions, like cancer, liver disease, COPD, cystic fibrosis, etc. These individuals will be eligible for the vaccine at state-run mass vaccination sites. For non-state run vaccination sites, local health departments will create their own guidance on how and when to schedule appointments for the vaccine. In Nassau, the county government is using the guidelines provided by NYS. Please use this link [here](#) to view the county's vaccine information. For a complete list of eligible groups, visit the NYS distribution website [here](#). You may use the NYS eligibility form to check whether you can receive the vaccine as well. Click [here](#) to access the form.

It is also important to note that pharmacies, like CVS and Walgreens, are restricted to vaccinating people 65 and older. Thus, individuals under 65 with health conditions like those described above, cannot yet go to a pharmacy for the vaccine.

Lastly, due to expanded eligibility criteria and the quantity of shipments from the federal government, the current supply of vaccines is still very limited. However, the Biden Administration is working to alleviate this supply issue. First, on February 23, the administration announced that it would increase state vaccine allotments to 14.5 million doses each week, an increase from 13.5 million doses. Second, the administration previously announced that it would double the quantity of doses sent directly to pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens. The federal government began to send vaccines directly to pharmacies earlier this month. This program is expected to expand over time.

TYPES OF VACCINES

In the U.S., there are currently two vaccines that have been authorized by the CDC to fight against COVID-19: the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and the Moderna vaccine. Both of these vaccines require two shots, spaced 21 and 28 days apart respectively. Both vaccines were approved by the FDA in December, and the approvals were then affirmed by New York's COVID-19 Clinical Advisory Task Force.

Although only two vaccines have been approved in the U.S. thus far, the CDC notes that other vaccines are being reviewed as well. Indeed, AstraZeneca, Janssen, and Novavax's vaccines are all currently in clinical trials.

In addition, **on February 24, the FDA released a report stating that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was safe and effective in protecting against COVID-19.** An FDA committee will be reviewing this information on February 26, potentially leading to approval over the weekend.

You can learn more about each vaccine and vaccine safety on the CDC website [here](#).

VACCINES AND COVID STRAINS

In the last few months, we have witnessed the spread of different variants of the virus that causes COVID-19. These variants have appeared all over the world, in places like the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Brazil. All three variants have been detected in the United States.

In light of this information, there is concern amongst scientists, health officials, and the public as to whether or not our current vaccines will work against these new strains. Although studies on this precise topic are still ongoing, early evidence suggests that there is some reduction in efficacy. However, studies have also shown the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines still offer some protection against the new variants.

Additionally, the FDA has issued some guidance to allow vaccine manufacturers to respond to virus mutations with much greater speed by reducing some regulatory steps as we learn more about these new variants. And both Pfizer and Moderna are already working on a booster shot for their vaccines that will be more effective against these new strains.

WHERE CAN YOU GET A VACCINE?

There are different providers that individuals can contact to make an appointment for a vaccine. Below are options for providers.

New York State

- Click [here](#) to see if you are eligible for a vaccine. Once you fill out the online form, you will see a list of New York State-run providers in your region. If appointments are available, the website will indicate that and give you the chance to book an appointment.
- In addition, you can use the New York State hotline to book appointments by phone: 1-833-697-4829
- Once you successfully book an appointment for a vaccine at a state-operated site, be sure to complete the NYS COVID-19 Vaccine Form. A link to that form, as well as all NYS vaccine site information, can be found [here](#).

Northwell Health

- If you are eligible, you can call the Northwell Health vaccine hotline to potentially schedule an appointment: 1-844-919-8222
- Visit the Northwell Health [website](#) for updates and information on appointment availability.

About 6,500 pharmacies nationwide have started to receive vaccine doses from the federal government to distribute in accordance with state and local government eligibility guidelines.

- **CVS:** About 44 CVS stores in New York have the ability to provide vaccines. This will be expanded over the coming weeks. At the time of writing, **the CVS stores in Bethpage, Copiague, Islip Terrace, Manorville, Mattituck, and West Sayville have the ability to provide vaccines.** However, CVS has stated that its participating locations may change over time. You can use their mobile app, [website](#) or call 1-800-746-7287 to book an appointment.
- **Walgreens:** In order to obtain a vaccine from Walgreens, you will need to create an online account. This can be done [here](#). It is currently unclear what specific Walgreens stores are offering the vaccine on Long Island. Information will be updated as it becomes available. Please contact your local Walgreens to see whether that location is offering the vaccine.

Nassau County

- The Nassau County website also contains information on vaccine distribution. At the bottom of the page linked [here](#), you can check on appointment availability for a few specific locations.

We expect more vaccines to become available in the coming weeks, so please keep checking in with providers for timely updates.

VACCINE STATISTICS

Shot Distribution Across New York*

| First Doses Received | First Doses Administered | Second Doses Received | Second Doses Administered |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 2,477,825 | 2,252,945 | 1,390,250 | 1,183,999 |

Shot Distribution on Long Island*

| Total Doses Received | Total Doses Administered |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 485,990 | 428,672 |

Vaccine Distribution as a Percentage of the New York Population**

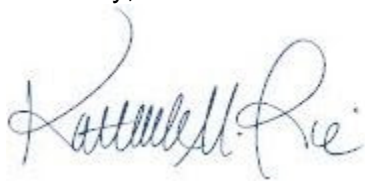
| Percentage Given One Shot | Percentage Given Two Shots |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 12.5% | 6.4% |

Statistics current as of 2/24/2021

* - [COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker](#)

** - [COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States](#)

Sincerely,



Kathleen Rice

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